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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/06/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKEY: ANNUAL MILITARY PROMOTIONS AND DISMISSALS  
ANNOUNCED

REF: A. ANKARA 1970  
[1](#)B. IIR 6 898 0650 07

Classified By: A/DCM Dan Sreebny for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Results of the 2007 Supreme Military Council (YAS) meeting, announced August 4, included the promotion of 34 generals and admirals and the extension of service for 40 general officers. As expected, General Aydogan Babaoglu was named Air Force Commander, and Admiral Muzaafer Metin was made Commander of Turkish Naval Forces. Promotions are effective as of August 30. Deputy Chief of Defense Staff (DCHOD) GEN Ergin Saygun will remain in his position for one more year. Twenty-three officers were dismissed for disciplinary reasons, including 10 for "fundamentalist" activities. End summary.

#### New Air Force and Navy Commanders

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[1](#)2. (C) As widely expected in assignment announcements following the YAS (ref a), War Academies Commander GEN Aydogan Babaoglu will succeed GEN Faruk Comert as Commander of the Air Force. GEN Babaoglu, 63, served as a pilot in various units of the Turkish Air Force until 1974. He has held a series of staff officer and command positions, including a tour as department section chief at Southern Europe Air Force Command in Naples. He was promoted to brigadier general in 1991 and served as a base commander and as Chief, Plans and Programs Department of the Air Force. He later served successively as head of the Air Force personnel department; Air Force Chief of Staff; and Commander, Second Tactical Air Force. He has been a full general since August [1](#)2005. He speaks English and is reported to be favorably inclined towards the United States.

[1](#)3. (C) Meanwhile, Fleet Commander ADM Muzaffer Metin Atac will replace Admiral Yener Karahanoglu as Navy Commander. ADM Atac, 61, served on destroyers following his graduation from the Turkish Naval Academy, rising to Commodore of Destroyer Division III in 1990. He has served in staff positions with the Turkish General Staff (TGS), National Security Council (NSC), and at NATO as Deputy Turkish Military Representative to Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE). As a Rear Admiral (LH) in 1992, he served as

Chief of Personnel for the Navy and Commander of the Turkish Mine Group. He was later Chief of Staff, Turkish Fleet Command; Inspector General for the Turkish Naval Forces Command; and Northern Sea Area Commander. He was promoted to the rank of admiral in 2005. ADM Atac speaks English.

#### DCHOD to Stay in Place

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¶4. (C) DCHOD GEN Ergin Saygun, considered to be CHOD GEN Yasar Buyukanit's protg and right hand, will remain in his position for a second year and until the end of Buyukanit's tenure. Based on his promotion year group, Saygun is out of cycle to become either Land Forces Commander or CHOD and should retire in 2009. (Comment: Saygun is a close contact and his continuation as DCHOD augurs well for continued open dialogue at a time when working-level U.S.-Turkish General Staff relations can be occasionally problematic. End Comment).

#### Promotions and New Assignments

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¶5. (U) In all, 34 general officers were promoted to a higher rank, and 45 colonels and Navy captains were promoted to one-star rank. The most significant new assignments within the Land Forces included the move of GEN Ismail Kocman from Third Army Commander to Commander, First Army. Normally, First Army is a stepping stone to the Land Forces Command and, hence, to the CHOD position. However, Kocman will likely retire out of First Army in 2008. That would allow Jandarma Commander GEN Isik Kosaner to take the Land Forces command in 2008, succeeding GEN Basbug who would become CHOD. Kosaner would then follow him as CHOD in 2010. Meanwhile,

LTG Necdet Ozel was promoted to full general and assigned command of the Aegean Army in Izmir. Ozel is now in line to become CHOD in 2013. LTG Erdal Ceylanoglu was promoted to full general and named commander of the Training and Doctrine Command. Also promoted was LTG Saldiray Berk, who moves from 4th Corps to become Commander, Third Army. See ref b for additional details.

#### Fewer Dismissals than 2006

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¶6. (C) Twenty-three officers were dismissed by the August 2007 YAS for disciplinary reasons, including 10 for "fundamentalist" (overtly religious) activities. A second YAS meeting, normally held in November, may lead to additional dismissals. The names and ranks of the dismissed officers were not released, but all are believed to be junior or mid-level officers. In 2006, 54 officers were forced out, and the YAS for the first time differentiated between those officers let go for disciplinary problems (including corruption, immoral behavior, and unprofessional actions) and those dismissed for excessive piety. Prior to 2006, officers were removed by the YAS for "disciplinary reasons" without further explanation. Fifteen officers were forced out in 2005, while 20 were cashiered in 2003 and again in 2004.

¶7. (C) As in previous years, Prime Minister Erdogan reportedly reviewed the files of those officers recommended for dismissal and annotated some of them to reflect his view that the decisions of the YAS should be subject to civil judicial review. The PM is not able to overturn a majority vote by the YAS on dismissal decisions. Judicial review of YAS decisions would require an amendment to the constitution.

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